

Friis, John

From: Joseph Baxer [jjbaxer@charter.net]
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2009 9:55 AM
To: Friis, John
Subject: Language Requirement

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United Nations Association Connecticut

P.O. Box 369

Kent, CT 06757

February 23, 2009

Senator Thomas Gaffey

Representative Andrew Fleischmann

Co-Chairs, Education Committee

Connecticut General Assembly

Hartford, Connecticut

Dear Sen. Gaffey and Rep. Fleischmann:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the United Nations Association – Connecticut

and its many members in the State of Connecticut, I write to express my support for Raised Bill No. 945: *An Act Concerning World Language Requirements*.

The UNA – Connecticut, most recently guided by the distinguished decade-long leadership of Irving J. Stolberg, believes that the foreign language requirement will benefit every Connecticut student living and working in our increasing interconnected economy and society.

The mission of the United Nations Association – Connecticut is to educate, mobilize and inspire support for the principles and vital work of the United Nations and to advocate the constructive leadership of the United States within the United Nations.

Comprised of six chapters statewide, the chapters of the Connecticut United Nations Association offer programs benefitting members and the community at large. The Northwest Connecticut chapter offers a Scholarship for International Cooperation (Established in Memory of Lisl C. Standen) that requires “progress in developing fluency in a foreign language and a commitment to continue foreign language study.”

Language learning is integral to cross-cultural communication skills, and, just as importantly, it offers students an additional context for the study of culture, geography, economy and politics. These attributes shape a distinctive world view that includes how future Connecticut residents will interact with fellow Connecticut residents from around the world (12% of the state’s population is foreign-born), travel overseas, interact with international visitors, and participate in the State’s vibrant export economy.

Connecticut will reap the benefit from more students knowing a language and, as a result, having an additional knowledge base to help ensure success in our internationalized society and economy.

While we do not expect fluency from a two-year requirement, we will see a more informed Connecticut citizenry -- one that has gained linguistic and cultural appreciation, one that, as a result, has an expanded world view. Such views and exposure open the door to understanding the world that others live in and increase an

understanding of the complex role and value that the United Nations and international institutions play in addressing global issues.

Thank you for your consideration of the foreign language requirement.

Sincerely,

Joe Baxer

President, Board of Directors

UNA – Connecticut